WHIRRAKEE

June 2003 Vol. 24 No. 5

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BENDIGO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.
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Membership of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is open to all those interested in Natural History. The subscription rates are: Single $34; Family $40; Concession: Single $28.50; Family $34. *Whirrakee* subscription only is $34. These rates include GST.

General meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. The venue for General meetings is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square. The invited speaker at general meetings starts at 8:00pm and meetings conclude with supper.
If a workshop is held prior to the meeting, it will be advertised and it usually starts at 7.00pm.
The Annual Meeting is held in September.

Committee meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm. Members of the Committee are the Office Bearers listed above, together with the following members: Barbara Pelczynska, Bob Ruddick, Maurie Stone, Stuart Fraser.

Excursions Excursions are conducted irregularly and are advertised on the diary page of the *Whirrakee*. The assembly point for excursions is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, unless otherwise specified. In addition to local excursions, campouts are held several times each year, usually coinciding with long weekends or holiday periods.

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club has two active sub-groups:

Fauna Study Group: meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm in the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building.

Chairman: John Burtonclay, Fadersons Lane, Mandurang (5439 5710)
Secretary: Bill Holsworth, 13 Nabilla Crs., Bendigo (5443 4063)
Equipment Officer: Maurie Lewis (0407 427179)

Bird Observers Group: meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm in the Golden Square Senior Citizen Building.

Front Cover: Photographer: Tom Burton

The swamp wallaby is feeding in Cherry's flower garden. "Marsupial goats"! Nothing is too prickly for them. The smell of blood and bone is the only thing that will keep them away from the roses for even a short time.

WHIRRAKEE

Monthly Newsletter of the Bendigo Field Naturalist Club

Vol. 24, No. 5, June 2003

Whirrakee takes its name from the Whirrakee Wattle (*Acacia williamsonii*) which is virtually endemic to the Bendigo region

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Authors are responsible for the accuracy of the information they use and also for any opinions expressed in their articles.
Contributions will be included as soon as possible after they are received, although articles received more than one week after the monthly General Meeting will probably be too late for inclusion in the next issue of *Whirrakee*.
Articles in *Whirrakee* may be reproduced, but permission should be obtained from the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club, and acknowledgment should be given to the author and the Club. Some back issues are still available on request.

Editor's note
For those of you who went to the last general meeting and heard it announced that we are having a bird skinning workshop, please note that this has been changed. We will have this workshop, which promised to be a popular one, later in the year, but for this month we are lucky to have Miles Geldard introducing us his nature sketching and showing us how we can be artists too. See back page for starting time and what to bring.
And we are still continuing with the echidna theme... this time with a very unusual observation. How lucky can you be to see a thing like that, or is it pure skill to know where to stand and when? ? (see page 3). There will be even more on echidnas in another edition later on in the year, which will include the latest scientific information on this interesting mammal.
Marc Bellette has written about a new species of grass tree in the box-ironbark forests!....so, if you thought the last edition was full of interesting articles, I think this one is even better. Enjoy!

Garden Working Bee - BFNC Clubrooms

Sunday 22nd June from 9am - 11am.

General weeding and maintenance around the club gardens, followed by a cuppa.
Bring garden tools, gloves etc if you have them.

Recent Bird Observations

Author: Bird Observers Club

Flame Robin (2 males) Bridgewater - Sebastian Road, Yarraberb, 26/4/03
(28) Big Hill Range, Sedgwick, 24/4/03
Australian Pelican (1) on dam, Fadersons Lane, Mandurang, 31/3/03
Blue-faced Honeyeater (15), Tannery Lane, Mandurang, 2/4/03
Rainbow Lorikeet (2), Fadersons Lane, Mandurang, 15/3/03
Peregrine Falcon (2) Mandurang South Road, Sedgwick, 24/4/03
Golden Whistler (1), Goornong, 4/5/03 and 11/5/03
Olive-backed oriole (1), Tannery Lane, Mandurang 9/5/03
Black-chinned Honeyeater (5), Tannery Lane, Mandurang, 2/5/03
Noisy Friarbird (<5) Tannery Lane, Mandurang, April and May 03
(3) Goornong, 7/5/03
(several) Kangaroo Gully from 17/4/03
Common Mynah (2) William Perry Lane, Neilborough, 2/5/03
(2) Corner of Pierces Rd and Eaglehawk - Raywood Rd, Sebastian, 12/3/03
(1) Corner f William Perry Lane and Scotts Road, Neilborough, 13/3/03 and 15/3/03
(1) Lansell Plaza, Kangaroo Flat 19/3/03
(2) Allingham Street, Kangaroo Flat, 2/5/03
(1) Irwin Lane, Kangaroo Gully, 28/4/03
(2) Midland Highway, White Hills , 5/4/03
(7) Tannery Lane, Mandurang, 2/4/03

Notes:
The Flame Robins at Sedgwick were recorded at Glenise Moors' study site. This was the first record for the season. Some of the birds have previously been banded at the site, including one bird which was banded in 1996.

Noisy Friarbirds have been reported from a number of areas in good numbers. Apart from the locations above, they have been reported also from Spring Gully, Golden Square, Sedgwick, Strathdale and Eppalock. Some observers have not seen Noisy Friarbirds in their localities before and the numbers of birds are unusually high

The Bird Observers Group has recently been discussing Common Mynahs and members were asked to report any sightings of them. The results show that the species has become quite widespread. The group would welcome any further observations on the status of this bird from other members.

A first sighting in Strathfieldsaye

Author: Tony Morris

On Sunday the 20th April, a koala came to our block of land in Melaleuca Avenue, Jumortoun.

I first heard the sounds of "mobbing" by magpies and choughs some two hundred metres to the north of our block and wandered up to identify the cause of the alarm. I did not see the koala at that stage and concluded that the ruckus was a "territorial dispute".

Within a few minutes, the koala moved southward to our block where it remained perched some five metres up in the fork of a Red Box eucalypt. It remained there for two hours or so and then moved off quite rapidly to the north again. Pat, my wife, watched it bound away.

It was approximately three quarters of adult size.

In the ten year period since we have lived at this address, this is the first koala we have seen in our area.

Regarding "mobbing", Pat and I are often alerted to the presence of raptor, fox, goanna, snake or dog by the alarm call of birds. The dispersal intensity and type of bird making the alarm call all provide clues to the nature of the threat.

Occasionally, a pair of Wedge-tail Eagles will sail across our block at a height of several hundred metres on an east-west track. The magpies over an area of several hectares call but without the note of panic and urgency. The Noisy Miners join in with their "pip pip pip" calls but seem to know that the threat is of no real concern to them.

The Magpies are clearly very much more alarmed by a Little Eagle. The Noisy Miners join in a little more stridently. On several occasions, I have seen a Grey Falcon race through the canopy of the Red and Grey Box regrowth on our block, twisting and turning with great agility. The Noisy Miners panic and flee in all directions.

P.S. Tony also wrote that there are, as yet, no Mynahs in his area.
(See page 3, Bird Observations)

On the 1st of May I Saw an Echidna Swimming.

By Bill Holsworth

In the last week of April I gave a talk on the biology of the echidna to the Fauna Group. A couple of days later Carol and I went to Bright to enjoy the autumn weather and get into the mountains. On the morning of the 1st of May we moved our caravan to Myrtleford and then started out for a walk along the rail-trail. About 1 km west of the town centre the road and trail cross over Barwidgee Creek, about 500 m. from where the creek joins the Ovens River.

We arrived at the mouth of the creek at 12 noon and were admiring the yellow willow and the clear water when directly across the river from us an echidna appeared. It walked straight across 10 m. of river gravel to the edge of the river where it stopped and drank (? -sipped) water for about 15 seconds. Then it waded into the river and started swimming directly towards us. It swam with its head under water for about 2 m., then came up for air for about 3 to 4 seconds, and then puts its head under water and swam another couple of metres. It progressed across the river without a pause at a rate that was not much slower that the water rat we had seen the previous day.

It happened that I was at the very spot where the echidna came out of the water to climb the 60 cm. high bank. When it poked its head over the edge, it saw me and retreated to the undercut bank of the river. It walked about 50 m. along the river and tried several times to climb up before it was finally successful. Obviously it had used the crossing before and knew exactly where to exit from the river. They may look stupid, and appear half blind, but they know their territory and by crossing the river it indicates they don,t need to use scent to find their way about.

A New Species of Grass Tree in the Box and Ironbark Ecosystem

Author: Marc Bellette
School of Anthropology Geography and Environmental Studies
University of Melbourne

Grass trees (genus *Xanthorrhoea*) are an iconic species of the Australian bush yet the large tree-like species are relatively uncommon in central Victoria. In the box-ironbark, their distribution is restricted, occurring in two main areas, (1) the Rushworth-Heathcote-Seymour area (incorporating Puckapunyal) and (2) the Warby Ranges near Wangaratta. There are small populations in many other places, usually isolated. Some of these populations are clearly at-risk of local extinction, in some cases a few old individuals may be all that remain.

Grass trees have the unusual status of being a single genus in the plant family Xanthorrhoeaceae. There are 33 taxa (28 species and 5 sub-species) described. A character of the family is the ability to thicken the stem outwards as well as upwards creating a "woody" stem. This is unusual in monocots. Other characters are the contractile roots that pull the stem into the ground, the black coating of the seeds, and the production of resin. Some species achieve tall trunks (up to 6m) through packing the dead leaf bases tightly around the inner growth material to form a thick protective stem.

A New Species Discovered in Victoria

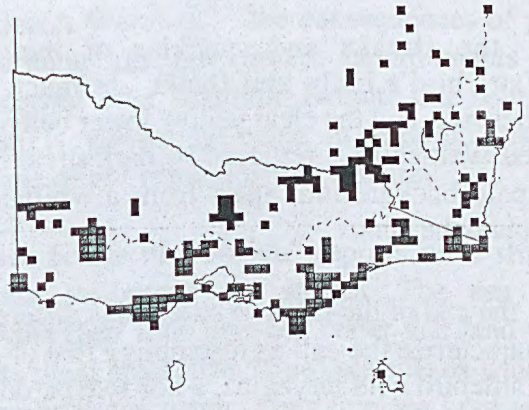
Until very recently, there were only two species thought to occur in Victoria's box-ironbark, namely the tall tree-like species *Xanthorrhoea australis* (the Austral Grass Tree), and the underground-stemmed *Xanthorrhoea minor* subsp. *lutea* (the small grass tree). However, on closer inspection all records of *Xanthorrhoea australis* inland of the Divide in Victoria are actually another species previously unrecorded in Victoria, *Xanthorrhoea glauca* subsp *angustifolium*. David Bedford, previously of the NSW Herbarium first described this species in the Flora of Australia in 1986. Bedford described the known distribution as being south of north-central NSW (Coonabarabran), to the inland slopes of the Snowy Mountains. Bedford did not consider an incursion into Victoria and clearly included the populations around Wangaratta as *X. australis*. Subsequent floristic work in southern NSW has revealed that *X. glauca* is more prevalent in the area than just the "slopes of the Snowy Mountains" as Bedford suggested. In fact it clearly extends into the box-ironbark forests of the interior, places like Temora, Parkes, Wagga Wagga, Holbrook and The Rock to name a few.

Picture above: *Xanthorrhoea glauca* subsp. *angustifolium* is thought to obtain heights far in excess of *X. australis*, a character of the Box-Ironbark populations that supports the name change. This photo was taken in NSW.
Photo credit unknown.

Field Recognition

The differences between *X. glauca* and *australis* are based on many morphological character traits and are quite unrecognisable to the untrained eye, yet once known are clearly discernable in the field. Generally, the floral material is the most reliable character, yet the height of the plants, the glaucous leaves and the relative long length of the scape (the woody stalk at the base of the flower) are features instantly recognisable in *X. glauca* subsp. *angustifolium* that are less discernable in *X. australis*. Using the key in the NSW Flora means that is relatively easy to tell them apart.

A Revised Distribution



Above: The proposed revision of the distribution of *Xanthorrhoea glauca subsp. angustifolium* (black squares) sees a clear pattern of distribution inland of the Great Dividing Range, that being contiguous with herbarium identifications and flora database records for NSW. *Xanthorrhoea australis* (grey squares) are generally found on the coastal side of the Great Dividing Range (dashed-line) with a major inland incursion west of the Grampians. Formerly *X. glauca* was not recognised in Victoria clearly creating a border anomaly in the Chiltern-Albury district.

What are the Biogeographical Differences?

X. australis is predominantly a coastal species of relatively high rainfall. It occurs south of Nowra to the Victorian-South Australian border, and along the east coast of Tasmania and off shore islands. Generally it occupies sandy wind deposited or granitic soils along the coast venturing onto clayey soils in some areas. This material is geologically speaking much younger and altitudinally lower than the Devonian-Silurian sediments and granites that are characteristic of many box-ironbark *Xanthorrhoea* sites.

X. glauca subsp. *angustifolium* on the other hand has an inland distribution associated with the box-ironbark and western slopes vegetation and climate. It grows on a diverse range of geological types, yet these soils are usually infertile even compared to other native forest soils. This is often due to the very high quartz content of metamorphic and granitic substrates.

Populations in the central Victorian forests show features that are undescribed for any one *Xanthorrhoea* species. It is uncommon in *Xanthorrhoea* species to have wide distributions, and in fact the majority of species have very small distributions. It is therefore possible, that Victorian populations may reveal new species given proper taxonomic treatment.

Acknowledgements: This work could not have been possible without the professional support and advice given by David Cameron, Senior Flora Officer of DSE, and Neville Walsh of the Herbarium of Victoria. Thanks also to all field naturalists who have provided locations and descriptions, allowed access to private land, particularly Eileen Collins of Friends of Chiltern National Park.

In come the honeyeaters

Author: Tom Burton

This has been a most unusual autumn. After years of below average rainfall, including the last year-and-some months, in which rainfall was below average every month, we finally received a couple of March and April downpours that gave us above-average months for a change.

Whether in response to the rain, or in response to the drought, or just in response to their own cycles, all three of the Grey Box, Yellow gum and Red Ironbark have flowered a treat, and in turn, along have come honeyeaters in numbers I have not seen for years.

The Yellow-faced and White-naped Honeyeaters are notably migratory (though little is known of the routes they take), and their numbers this year are the best I have seen since the golden year 1989, the year that *Grevillea alpina* last flowered prolifically.

I am not so confident of the date of the last big influx of Noisy Friarbirds (see the Frasers' article in the May *Whirrakee*), but it was somewhere in the early '90s. This year they are all over the Flora Hill area.

I have also seen the Fuscous Honeyeater in bigger than usual numbers, but not the Yellow-tufted. The number of Eastern Spinebills feeding on the grevilleas in our garden is also up on previous years, and Blue-faced Honeyeaters have reached our place for the first time since we moved to Mandurang.

The highlight came for me on 2 May, when I saw an old friend I had not seen in Bendigo previously—the Little Wattlebird—feeding in flowering Yellow Gums on our block and just over the fence in Tannery Lane, Mandurang, near Faderson's Lane. I was surprised to see it, because I remembered the vehemence of Don Franklin's assertions that all reports of Little Wattlebirds in the Region must be erroneous. This honeyeater is sometimes misreported because of misidentification of immature Red Wattlebirds (a species also present in huge numbers this autumn).

In a roughly increasing order of usefulness, here are some features of the Little Wattlebird that distinguish it from the Red Wattlebird:

- the Little Wattlebird is smaller than the Red Wattlebird—the difference is significant, but I often find differences in size useless, unless I see the two species together. The Little does give an impression of being more compact, less lanky than the Red Wattlebird;

- the Little Wattlebird lacks a conspicuous red wattle on the side of the face—but the wattle is hard to see most of the time in Red Wattlebirds, and varies in size with the age of the bird, so inability to see a wattle is of little use;

- the streaks and speckles of the Little Wattlebird's belly and flanks are much more extensive, and the clear yellow lower belly of the Red Wattlebird is replaced by dark streaking on a pale background, apart from a whitish area around the vent;

- the call of the Little Wattlebird is different—I characterize the call as resembling that of a Red Wattlebird with laryngitis, a horrible parody of a horrible call;

- when the Little Wattlebird flies, a chestnut patch on the wing becomes visible—this is never present in the Red Wattlebird.

I saw and heard (and watched calling) a single Little Wattlebird each day between 2–4 May and on 10–11 May, from distances as close as five metres, with binoculars. At the time of writing (13 May), I do not know whether it is still present. Not being around during daylight hours is the lot of the worker in autumn.

From the Mailbag
Author: Elaine Mathison

Each month the club receives a number of newsletters and magazines: some by subscription and some in exchange for Whirrakee. These are available from the club library.

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NATURE AUSTRALIA(Aust. Museum)
Autumn 2003

"Ghosts of Gliders Past" looks at research into the survival of Greater Gliders in remnants of native forest in the Tumut area of New South Wales. The study area had originally been used in the 1960s; data from that time proved very useful for comparison.

"Desert Warming" : the consequences of global warming on our desert environments have received little attention. Despite our belief that rain is always welcome in central Australia, some of our reptiles would disagree.

"Sea Kraits of Vanuatu" reports on a study of these venomous sea snakes. The sea kraits divide their time between water and land which sets them apart from "true" sea snakes which are always in the water. The three sea krait species found in the area manage to live peacefully together.

"Brilliance on the Wing" reveals how butterflies create their wonderful structural colouration.

"Running with Buffaloes": they can be very damaging to the environment, yet Swamp Buffaloes are significant for the people of the Northern Territory.

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NATURAL HERITAGE(Nat.Her.Trust)
Autumn 2003

The focus of this issue is our most important natural resource: water. It reports on several community projects for stream improvements in various parts of Australia.

BIRD OBSERVER(BOCA)
April 2003

- Bushfires in southern Australia: reports from affected areas
- Bird Observations: an albino Superb Fairy-wren in outer Melbourne
- New South Wales Tagalong: birdwatching in the far north-west
- The Harrier: conservation network newsletter

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THE VICTORIAN NATURALIST(VFNC)
February 2003

"Patterns of Occurrence of Snow Pratia in Mount Buffalo National Park": competition from other plants causes a decline in abundance of this rare plant.

"Reproductive Characteristics of Road-verge and Reserve Populations of Native Cherry": how native species respond to man-made ecosystems is an important issue for conservation biology.

"The Potential Impact of Climate Change on Plant Communities in the Koscuiszko Alpine Zone": an evaluation of twelve plant communities.

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Also received recently:

*Castlemaine Naturalist(CFNC)
May 2003
*Ballarat Naturalist(BFNC)
May 2003
*Geelong Naturalist(GFNC)
May 2003
*Newsletter(Maryborough FNC)
August 2002-February 2003
*The Wild Connection(Wildlife Rescue)
Autumn 2003

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May General Meeting – Speaker : Kathleen Ralston "Beauty in Miniature"

by Sabine Wilkens

Kathleen started her love affair with lichens as a 'normal' field naturalists with an interest in wetland plants. She studied, in particular, beach plants near Torquay, when one day after rain, she noticed the bright and glossy lichens on the very plants she had been looking at.
This event got Kathleen hooked on these interesting organism and thus a new world opened for her....
After finding out that not much is known about lichens when constantly running into the frustration of not being ale to name what she saw, Kathleen teamed up with a lichen expert from Canberra, a relationship that is ongoing. After becoming an expert herself, she obtained an (unpaid) position at the herbarium where she works today collecting and classifying lichens and building up the collection.

One myth that Kathleen wanted to overturn from the start is that lichens kill fruit trees. I had not ever heard anybody say that, but then, I don't know many people who worry about fruit trees. Lichens seem to love deciduous trees and may be this is because they thrive under the extra light they get when the leaves fall off in winter. May be that is one reason why lichens are generally not found on our evergreeen eucalypts (another might be that eucalypts shed their bark and any lichen that did establish on a branch or trunk would be shed as well).

An interesting fact about lichens is that they are relatively sensitive to atmospheric pollution. Sadly this means many lichens have been lost from industrialised countries, especially in Europe before they were ever recorded. On the other hand, the knowledge that lichens abound in a place, makes you want to breathe deeply...

There are three growth forms of lichens and these are used initially when identifying them.
Crustose lichens are flat and barely raised off the substrate.
Foliose lichens have a leaf-like appearance.
Fruticose lichens are 'shrubby', ie three-dimensional and sometimes look like little mushrooms or tiny bushes.
Lichens are not plants though, they do not belong to the Kingdom Plantae. The body of a lichen represents a symbiotic (mutually beneficial) relationship between a fungus and an alga. By mass about 90% is fungus and 10% is alga. The fungal body completely encloses the algal cells. These gain protection, from the elements and some water and mineral nutrients from the fungus and, in turn, photosynthesise and pass some of the manufactured carbohydrates to the fungal partner.

When they reproduce by spores, the fungal spores (produced via sexual reproduction in fruiting bodies called apothecia) are thrown to the wind or travel in rain water and, far away from the parent lichen, depend on finding their algal partner before starting another colony. Nobody really knows how this happens exactly.
There is another way of reproducing, i.e. asexually, and this is much less chancy. It occurs via tiny fragments (soredia), which contain both alga and fungus. Many thousand of these may be produced in a colony and when they land on a suitable surface, the can start new growth.

This growth is very slow, about 1-4mm per year but even less if conditions are not suitable. They need only some space, light and water and they can withstand enormous temperature ranges.

So far about 20 000 lichens have been found worldwide, about 2500 in Australia of which 1000 are believed to be endemic.
New lichens are discovered all the time so this number is a gros underestimate of the diversity that exists out there.
Lichens have a very interesting geographic distribution, some occur only in alpine habitats worldwide, some are confined to Gondwanan continents, some to the pan-pacific region, whereas others only occur at both poles.

Another interesting fact about their distribution in Australia is that they are found commonly near the ocean (e.g. Rocks at Wilson's prom seem to be a lichen hotbed but they are also found on mangroves, coastal tea trees etc). Inland areas that are naturally saline, like Pink Lakes, or Hattah Lakes, also harbour a fabulous lichen flora.
Why might this be?

Their importance has long been recognised in mallee ecosystems, where the soil is thin and fragile but held in place by a carpet of soil covering lichens. These are essential in keeping

the soil in place but hard-hoofed animals can easily destroy this layer and cause widespread soil erosion. In other places lichens act as soil starters. Although they do not require any material from the substrate other than the space to grow on, their exudates (by-products of metabolism?) will slowly break down a rock surface, for example, and the crumbly rock become the first step in soil formation and eventual colonisation of mosses and higher plants.

Other than their importance for the ecology of a place, people have recognised lichens are indicator species for air quality (as mentioned before), as dating tool for historical structures (e.g. knowing how many millimetres a colony grows each year might give clues about the age of gravestones or buildings or at least the age since they was last cleaned...). Lichens have also long been used as dyes but as, in Australia, they are protected like other wild life, collection is illegal unless a permit is issued.

In her talk, Kathleen shared this relatively unknown world with us and I would not be surprised if a few of us did also get hooked like she did many years ago.
I already was, so I was a lost cause but I much appreciated Kathleen's beautiful slides and most of all, the feeling of appreciation for these (not exactly fashionable, cute or cuddly) organisms.
It was a great talk and showed how, as an amateur, one can really get involved in a scientific topic for the love of it, and end up getting a lichen named after oneself! This does not happen to many people!

The following message, books and references were sent by Kathleen after the talk:

"I promised I would send you a list of lichen books that you may consider for either your library or for other BFN members. The first one mentioned is the one I would suggest for general information for field naturalists with a genuine interest in lichens. I haven't got a copy yet, but am told it is an excellent introduction - and does not matter that it is called `New Zealand'."

B. & N. Malcolm, 2000, *New Zealand Lichens*, Micro Optics Press, N.Z. ISBN 0-9582224-0-1. [easy to read, but not at the expense of information and botanical detail, lots of useful line drawings and photographs]

Some of the section/chapter headings are:

- Home is almost anywhere
- You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours
- Dog eat dog competition
- Light-trappers
- Getting the best of two worlds
- Identity crisis
- Sexual reproduction
- Sterile lichens
- Vegetative reproduction
- Spot tests
- Uses past and present
- Braving the elements
- Pollution damage
- Lichen names

You could get the info. on ordering etc. through Bill and Nancy Malcolm at Email address <nancym@clear.net.nz>

Other Books include:

3 *Flora of Australia* volumes devoted to lichens – No. 54, 55 and 58A, available from ABRS, GPO Box 787, Canberra, ACT 2601. [These are not suitable for beginners.]

G. Kantvilas and S.J. Jarman, 1999, *Lichens of rainforest in Tasmania and south-eastern Australia,* Flora of Australia Supplementary Series No. 9, ABRS, GPO Box 787, Canberra, ACT 2601. [Very good fieldguide, beautifully illustrated with photographs by Bruce Fuhrer.]

G. Kantvilas, J.A. Elix & S.J. Jarman, 2002, *Tasmanian Lichens: Identification, Distribution and Conservation Status*, Flora of Australia Supplementary Series No. 15, ABRS, Canberra. ISBN 0 642 56820 0. [Only Black and White photographs – good taxonomic info. but not for the novice.]

W. M. Malcolm and D.J. Galloway, 1997, New Zealand Lichens, Checklist, Key, and Glossary, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington. [Excellent close up photographs and glossary of lichen terms – but not a fieldguide]

David Eldridge and Merrin E. Tozer, 1997, *A Practical Guide to Soil Lichens and Bryophytes of Australia's Dry Country*, Department of Land and Water Conservation, GPO Box 39, Sydney NSW 2001. [Excellent fieldguide for dry country cryptogams]
(This book is here at the LaTrobe Uni library)

New Environmental Coalition formed

Representatives of interested community groups and individuals have met twice now to form an overarching support network for environmental groups and individuals within the Greater Bendigo region.

Groups represented include:
Maiden Gully Group
Neangar Park Subdivision Group
Diamond Hill Residents Group
Kangaroo Flat Concerned Residents
Spring Gully Environment Group
Bendigo and District Environment Council
Wellsford Watch
Golden Square Residents Association
Friends of Junortoun

The coalition intends to:
- offer support to individual members of the community and groups who are grappling with environmental issues in their own area
- act as a support and disseminator of information to the wider community
- raise the level of community debate so that Council and other levels of government are fully aware of all residents' views.

Issues of immediate importance include:
- appropriate development for the surrounds of Lake Weeroona,
- development of management plans for all major public open spaces and gardens,
- generating alternative solutions to matters of environmental concern,
- lobbying council and providing suggestions for better protection of our bush,
- pushing for buffer zones around National Parks,
- assisting implementation of the Council's Green Plan,
- development of vegetation surveys and open space plans.

Meetings will be held fortnightly on the second and fourth Thursday of each month, at the Golden Square Senior Citizens building at 6.00pm - all interested members of the public are welcome to attend.

Further information is available from the Coalition spokesperson, Stuart Fraser, on 5443 1326.

Initially, there was discussion about including the members as 'representatives' of the environmental/community groups to which they belonged.

This issue was raised at the May BFNC meeting where the members present demonstrated their strong support for including our club in the list of groups represented, however, all members should have the chance to express an opinion on this, hence this notice with its reply slip, which you may want to use for this purpose.

Reply Slip

In my opinion, the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc

should / should not

be included in the list as a representative group supporting the Bushlinks Environmental Coalition.

(Please circle your preference or, cross off the option that you don't agree with)

Name of BFNC member .....

Signature .....

Date .....

Please post to: The Secretary, Bendigo FIeld Naturalists' Club Inc.
PO Box 396, Bendigo Vic. 3552

Or arrange to have this returned at the next Club meeting (June).

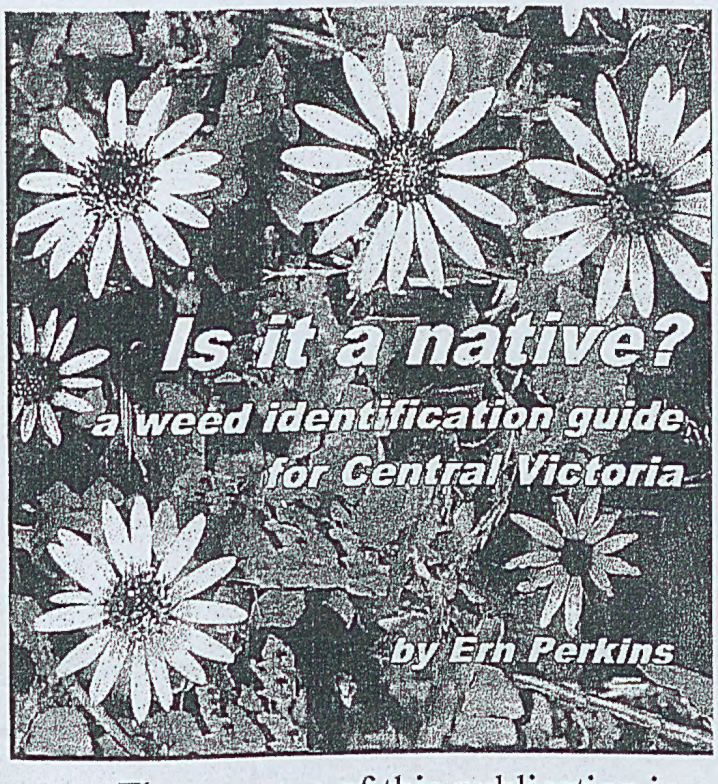
Is it a Native?

These have been selling like hotcakes, so here is the advertisement again, in case you have missed it.

A Weed Identification Guide for Central Victoria

A CD produced by the Castlemaine Field Naturalist Club, Mount Alexander Shire and North Central Catchment Management Authority

Editor's comment: I purchased this CD at the last general meeting for $ 5.00 and have found it excellent value. I have now been told Bill Holsworth has obtained another lot and will sell these at the next meeting, alternatively, an order form is printed on the back page.
Highly recommended!



The purpose of this publication in CD format is to assist with weed identification in the Central Victorian Region. It is written for landholders, landcare members and anyone wishing to revegetate land or to replace introduced plants with natives local to the area. A weed is therefore defined as any plant that is not a local native.

The CD includes weeds and some native plants that are sometimes mistaken for weeds.

ORDER FORM

"Is it a Native?" by Ern Perkins

The cost of the CD is $5.00 or $7.00 posted. It requires Acrobat Reader V 4 or 5. A copy of V 5.1 for Windows is included on the disk.

For postal orders please provide the following details and send this form to:

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc.
PO Box 324
Castlemaine Vic 3450

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....

.....

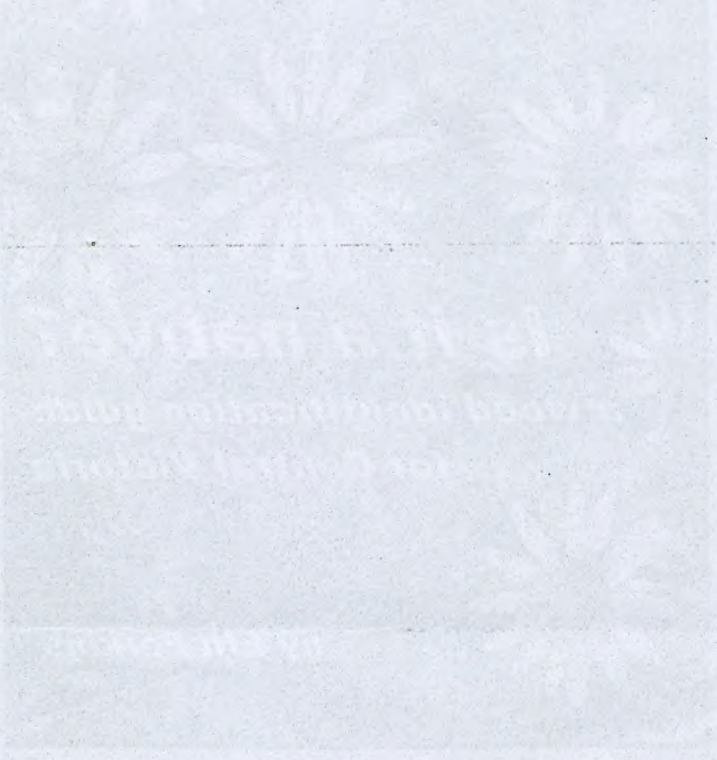
Telephone:.....

Number required:.....

Payment encl. ($7.00 per copy):.....

Please make cheques payable to Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc. (no A0003010B)

The disk may also be purchased over the counter from: Mount Alexander Shire Council, 25 Lyttleton Street, Castlemaine, Vic 3450, 9.00 am-4.45 pm.



Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.

Guest Speaker Syllabus for General Meetings 2003

Second Wednesday 8:00 pm

Please check each **WHIRRAKEE** for additional events or changes.
If a workshop is planned, it will start at 7:00pm. The speaker will be introduced at 8:00 pm.
If there is no workshop, the general meeting will start at 7:30pm, with the speaker being introduced at 8:00pm.

Date - 2001	Topic	Speaker
June 11	'First impressions of the environment of the Mount Alexander goldfields.' It is sometimes assumed that early European arrivals in this region were uniformly destructive and unappreciative of natural values. Deirdre will explore this assumption by looking at the first impressions of the miner/writers Howitt, Fauchery and Sherer of the goldfields in the 1850s. *Note that there is also a workshop planned for this meeting (see back page)*	Deirdre Slattery
July 9	'The recent bushfires in the Victorian Alps and the process of recovery.'(watch out!, this talk contains some chemistry)	Michael Angove & Daniel Bennett (La Trobe University, Bendigo)
August 13	'Recognition and conservation of sites of geological significance': (examples from the Bendigo region; alpine Australia and the Newer Volcanic Province).	Neville Rosengren
September 10	AGM: 'Ups & downs of BFNC's Conservation campaigns'- A biased and selective Report Card of some of our Club's activities.	
October 8	'Classification of Threatened Fauna in Victoria - definition & assessment of 'Threatened Fauna'; what it means to be on the list.'	Peter Menkhost (Arthur Rylah Institute)
November 12	'The importance of Environmental Flows in rivers, streams and wetland areas.'	Paul Sinclair (Environment Victoria)
December 10	Christmas Dinner 'Birds of the Box-Ironbark Forest'	Chris Tzaros

Diary

The General, Bird Observers Group and Fauna Study Group meetings are held at the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square, unless otherwise indicated.

General Meeting

Wednesday, June 11 **7.00pm**

Please note: changed starting time:
Workshop: Introduction to nature sketching by Miles Geldard. Bring pencils and paper.

The speaker will start at **8.00pm**
Deirdre Slattery (La Trobe University, Bendigo), will talk about 'First impressions of the environment of the Mount Alexander goldfields.'
It is sometimes assumed that early European arrivals in this region were uniformly destructive and unappreciative of natural values. Deirdre will explore this assumption by looking at the first impressions of the miner/writers Howitt, Fauchery and Sherer of the goldfields in the 1850s.

Bird Observers Group
This group meets (in the clubrooms) on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm. Please confirm with Kerrie Norris (ph 54478017)

Fauna Group
This group meets (in the clubrooms) on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm. The next meetings are on:

Excursion June 15
Excursion to check local nest boxes. Contact: Kerrie 54478017 or Maurie 0407 427179.

Wednesday, June 25 **7.30pm**
Bandicoots - Kerrie Norris

Wednesday, July 23 **7.30pm**
To be announced

Wednesday, August 27
To be announced

Wednesday, September 2
A.G.M. plus topic of interest to be announced.

Garden Working Bee - BFNC Clubrooms

Sunday 22nd June from 9am - 11am.

General weeding and maintenance around the club gardens, followed by a cuppa.
Bring garden tools, gloves etc if you have them.

Wildlife Rescue & Information Network Inc.
W.R.I.N. is an organisation dedicated to the care of orphaned, sick or injured native animals.
It is fully endorsed by the Dept of Natural Resources and Environment.
Please call our Emergency Number for Help for Fauna in Need. Phone: 0419 356433.

Know your frog
The following sites both refer specifically to the Victorian frog fauna:

http://www.frogs.org.au/frogs/ is based closely upon the Frogwatch Field guide to Victorian Frogs. It has great information--photos, maps, keys, and pie charts to depict seasonal activity.

http://www.museum.vic.gov.au/collections/showcase.asp takes you to the showcase page at the Museum of Victoria. This site has links to accounts of other Victorian fauna besides frogs, including a great links to the butterflies and reptiles of Victoria. This site has bigger photos of the frogs than the other site, and longer call bites (taken from the Frogwatch tape, with introductions by Murray Littlejohn), but the sound can be slow to load up.